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Ray Confinement

NASHVILLE—Convicted assassin James Earl Ray, pale and haggard with unshaven stubble on his face, says his health is deteriorating in solitary confinement.

The man who confessed to the 1968 slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis held his first television interview Thursday and only his second meeting with newsmen since his imprisonment five years ago.

"It's like a cave dweller's existence," he said complaining of weight loss, the inability to keep a train of thought, infrequent showers and shaves and the lack of exercise and sunshine.

"I just want to exist under the same conditions as the rest of the prisoners," he said, adding that no other prisoner was kept in solitary for more than two months.

When asked if he feared reprisals from other prisoners, Ray said he had mingled with the prison populace without trouble at the now-closed Brushy Mountain maximum security prison at Petros, Tenn.



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